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SUBJECT: (U) LIBYA - FIFTH ANNUAL TIP REPORT SUBMISSION

REF: STATE 273089

11. (U) The U.S. Government resumed direct bilateral relations with Libya on June 28, 2004, after a 24-year gap, following Libya's decision to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction programs and Missile Control Technology Regime-class missiles.

12. (U) Libya remains among the countries considered special cases because although press, media, and NGO reports indicate a significant human trafficking problem within its territory, the USG has not been able to verify these reports directly because of its long absence from Tripoli. During the reporting period, Libya engaged with affected countries, particularly in Europe, to combat illegal migration, smuggling and human trafficking. Until this reporting period, the Libyan Government had denied it had any problem with immigration and trafficking in persons.

13. (U) There are an estimated 1.5 million non-Libyans resident in Libya, most from North African and Sub-Saharan African nations. This intricately mixed migrant community makes identification of the various groups and the circumstances under which they arrived in Libya difficult. According to most reports, Libya is a transit country for men, women, and children from Africa and Asia who hope eventually to migrate illegally to Europe. A large number of Africans arrive via the arduous journey through the Sahara across Libya's porous borders with Chad, Niger, Sudan, and Egypt, although many reportedly die in the desert before reaching Libya. Libya's porous 1100-mile (1,770 km) coastline is a route also used by traffickers in North African countries. Those attempting to reach Europe through Libya are exploited by smugglers who promise employment in Libya so that they can earn the \$800-\$1,000 per person fee to cross the Mediterranean. However, some may be forced to work as prostitutes, laborers, and beggars to pay the debt to traffickers because jobs are not readily available.

14. (U) African, Libyan and European smugglers reportedly operate much like an organized crime syndicate using deception to entice would-be migrants from their country of origin. Hundreds are reported to have perished in the waters of the Mediterranean when their boats, supplied by smugglers, capsized or when they were left afloat in boats that were in poor condition. In 2004, there were reports of thousands of Africans arriving into Italy each month by boat.

Government Action

15. (U) Due to lack of information, the extent of the Libyan Government's efforts to fight trafficking is not clear, but it has begun joint and active collaborations with other affected countries, particularly Italy, indicating that Libya recognizes it has a problem and is making an effort to fight human trafficking. In June 2004, the Libyan Government organized a conference of regional governments that are facing similar problems. In October, the Government invited the International Organization for Migration to Tripoli to discuss migration management. The Government considers all foreigners to be economic migrants and does not stipulate whether they are refugees, asylum seekers or trafficked persons.

16. (U) In February 2004, the Libyan Government extradited a major Eritrean human trafficker to Italy, after the Italian Government issued a warrant for her arrest. In 2004, the Nigerian police handed over 20 of its nationals to Nigerian

anti-trafficking authorities for further investigations and prosecution. The victims were on their way to Libya via the Niger Republic.

Areas for Improvement

17. (U) The Government of Libya, given the extensive trafficking within its territory, should conduct research to determine the extent of the problem and continue cooperating with neighboring countries. It should work with source and destination countries on anti-trafficking efforts by sharing information as well as tracking and evaluating its anti-trafficking efforts. Libya should similarly combine forces with the International Organization for Migration and NGOs active in the fight against human trafficking.

BERRY